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29 November 2016

Dear Minister

I write further to the publication of my Care Home Review Report, 'A Place to Call Home', my statutory Review into the quality of life of older people living in care homes in Wales published in November 2014.

As you are aware, I indicated that I would be undertaking a follow-up piece of work to assess the extent to which action undertaken has delivered the required change. I am therefore providing you with information on how I intend to take this forward.

I recognise through my on-going involvement with many public bodies across Wales that this is a time of substantial change for the social care sector. Many of the issues I wanted to see addressed as a result of my Review have been, or will be, taken forward through the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 as well as the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care Act (Wales) 2016 as well as associated regulations. However, there are a number of areas that did not require legislation to deliver change. Two years on, I take the view that sufficient time has passed to see concrete evidence of both action and impact in a range of these areas.

I have therefore decided to focus my follow-up review on the following areas; these all directly link back to my Requirements for Action.

- **The extent to which specialist continence support is available to care homes.**

This refers to the action I expected to be taken by the Welsh Government in respect of clear national guidelines for the use of continence aids and ensuring older peoples dignity. I will also be

asking Health Boards to provide examples of action they have taken, either in line with these guidelines or in line with their own commitment to best practice. (Requirement for Action 1.3)

- **The extent to which older people have access to specialist services, and where appropriate multi-disciplinary care, that provides rehabilitation support following a period of ill health.**

This refers to the action I expected Health Boards and Local Authorities to have taken in partnership to ensure that older people receive full support following a period of significant ill health to enable them to maximise their independence and quality of life. (Requirement for Action 2.2)

- **The prevention and management of falls, including national monitoring and reporting in respect of falls in care homes.**

This refers to the action I expected the Welsh Government to have taken in respect of a national falls prevention programme and its implementation within care homes, as well as the extent to which the level of falls is both monitored and reported on at a national and local level. (Requirements for Action 2.3 and 6.8)

- **The training available to, and undertaken by, all care home staff and managers in relation to understanding and caring for people with dementia, including the extent to which this is built into ongoing supervision and skills assessment.**

This refers to the action I expected Local Authorities, as commissioners of care, to have taken to ensure that all staff working in care homes understand the physical and emotional needs of people living with dementia. (Requirement for Action 3.2)

- **The undertaking of medication reviews and the use of anti-psychotic medication within care homes.**

This refers to the action I expected Health Boards to have taken to ensure that older people receive appropriate medication, including ensuring that older people are not prescribed anti-psychotic drugs inappropriately or as an alternative to non-pharmaceutical support. (Requirements for Action 3.5 and 4.4)

- **The extent to which commissioners, Local Authorities and Health Boards, and CSSIW understand the day to day quality of life experienced by older people living in care homes and the way in which this understanding is used to drive continuous improvement.**

This refers to the action I expected to have been taken to ensure that older people's views about their day to day care and quality of life are sought and used to drive continuous improvement, as well as the extent to which older people feel they have voice and control over their lives. (Requirement for Action 6.2)

- **The extent to which the Welsh Government has ensured there is an integrated approach to the inspection of nursing homes between CSSIW and HIW, with a particular focus on assessment and reporting of clinical care in nursing homes.**

This refers to ensuring that older people have consistent access to both a good quality of life and high quality clinical care. (Requirements for Action 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6)

- **The extent to which Local Authorities, as commissioners of care, have taken active steps to encourage the use of befriending initiatives within care homes, including ensuring older people have access to faith based support and specific cultural communities.**

This refers to the extent to which older people are supported to retain their existing friendships and have meaningful social contact both within and outside the care home, and the extent to which care homes form part of the wider community. (Requirement for Action 3.3)

- **The extent to which robust workforce planning projections have been developed by the Welsh Government in respect to future nursing staff requirements within the residential and nursing care sector. Also, the extent to which the Welsh Government and Health Boards have worked with the care home sector to develop it as a key part of the nursing career pathway.**

This refers to the need for clear forward planning, incentivised recruitment and career support to ensure there are sufficient numbers of specialist nurses receiving the support required to deliver high quality nursing care. (Requirements for Action 7.2 and 7.3)

In January 2017, I will further write to you to request the information I require to enable me to assess the progress made by your organisation against my Requirements for Action. It is my intention to use a pro forma to ensure a consistent approach and to maximise clarity in respect of the responses I am seeking.

I may, where I consider appropriate, take further evidence from public bodies and depending on the information provided, ask to meet with you to discuss and better understand the action you have taken.

It is my expectation that you will be able to evidence significant progress of the action you have undertaken and demonstrate the difference you have made to the lives of older people living within care homes.

It is my intention to publish my findings no later than November 2017. If you have any questions prior to my further correspondence to you in January, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Rochira". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Sarah Rochira
Older People's Commissioner for Wales